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ABSTRACT

Time management is critical for effective leadership and productivity among community college chairs and deans. An organization that is more time conscious tends to be more productive and less stressful. Similarly, an organization's time management culture can provide ideas for improving productivity and the work environment. One model of time management divides activities into four quadrants: important and urgent (e.g., deadlines and crises), important but not urgent (e.g., prevention activities and planning), urgent but not important (e.g., phone calls and meetings), and not important and not urgent (e.g., mail and busywork). In addition to applying this quadrant, deans and other administrators might wish to consider writing a personal mission statement and a personal master plan, determining the most valuable and productive use of time. Finally, strategies for maximizing available time include the following: (1) take control of how time is used; (2) improve commuting time; (3) plan for the possibility of waiting time; (4) make time for personal matters; (5) enlist the help of others in time management; (6) use a time management system such as a planner or computer program; (7) organize desks, offices, briefcases, and computer files; (8) reduce the amount of paper generated by sharing reading materials with colleagues; (9) try waking up an hour earlier each day; and (10) undertake energizing activities, such as vacations or sports, for personal renewal. (TGI)

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IN SEARCH OF THE PRECIOUS COMMODITY TIME: HOW TO USE AND ABUSE IT

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Dr. Helen M. Burnstad, Director of Staff Development, at Johnson County Community College, has been a teacher, department head, division chair, director of training and development and currently is a full time administrator serving all full- and part-time employees (some 2200) at JCCC. Her background includes a B.A. and M.A. from the University of Northern Colorado in speech communication and English and an Ed.D. in higher education administration from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

Helen has been a participant in the National Community College Chair Institute as well as a facilitator for the Institute. She has presented pre-conference workshops and concurrent sessions at each of the previous NCCCA conferences. She is active in the National Council for Staff, Program, and Organizational Development (NCSPOD). Helen is committed to the vital role of chairs and deans in advancing faculty development and student success.

In her spare time, Helen consults, trains, and shares information with community colleges, businesses, and health care organizations on such topics as time management, work behavioral styles, and team building. She likes to travel and read. She enjoys people and laughing!

In Search of the Precious Commodity TIME: How to Use and Abuse It

Time is the great equalizer! We all have the same amount of time -- 24 hours each day, 60 minutes in each hour, 60 seconds in each minute, etc. You cannot save time, stockpile it for later, or recapture the time that you've just "wasted." For all Chairs and Deans, the issue of time management seems to be a primary concern. In this article we will examine what you need to do before you can take control of your time, explore some issues of time management and recommend some strategies for maximizing your precious commodity.

What you need to know

What is the time management culture of your organization? Each organization has a time management culture. Stop and consider what your organization'stime managment culture is. Are people time conscious? Do they make appointments or just drop in? Are they late for meetings or prompt? Does the organization have a master calendar so you as a chair or dean can plan your deadlines and projects? Do you know from semester to semester when things like schedules, performance reviews, etc. have to be completed? Does anyone seem to care if your time is well used? Is there a culture of crisis? meetings ad nauseam? wasted efforts? An organization that is time conscious tends to be a more productive environment. It also is an organization where employees are not overwhelmed with work leading to stress leading to counterproductive behaviors.

How do you use your time now? While this recommendation may seem impossible because I'm going to ask you to spend time to learn how to use time more effectively, you must determine how you currently use your time. See the time log included in the appendix. Record how you are using your time every half hour every day for a minimum of one week. Many time management writers suggest that you do this for 21 days but I can hear you say "But I don't have time to do anything now! How can you expect me to take time to do this?" Just Do It. The record keeping needs to be done by time blocks NOT at the end of the day when you have "forgotten" lots of your interruptions, "quick calls", etc. Record your activities every half hour. It's vital to re-thinking how you use time.

When you've finished the record, take time to analyze it. How are you letting others control your time? Do you have an open door which invites drop in visitors? Interrupt yourself to respond to every ringing telephone or beeping e-mail message?

To what degree do you feel in control of your time? Determine your sense of control. Are you in control of your time or do you let your supervisor, peers, faculty members, your staff control your time? Gaining control seems to be one solution to the time crunch problem.

What are the shortcomings of your current time management system? Determine why you are not in control of your time now. Do you have a good sense of what is most important for you to be spending time on in your job? If you are in a position that requires time in multiple roles, you need to determine what the expectations are for each role. For example, if you are a faculty member serving in a chair position with only 3 hours of re-assigned time, your conflicts are massive! But what your organization is telling you is that you need spend only the equivalent of 90 clock hours on the chair duties. That is hardly enough time to get all that work done so you do need to make the case for more time assigned to you for the position.

Another consideration you want to give to your current time management system is whether the people around you understand that you need help managing your time. Build your team around the initiative to use time more effectively. Provide time management systems for them all and use them. It will take some effort to get organized and concentrated effort to improve the use and avoid the abuse of time by your team.

What you need to do to take control of your time

Now that you've done your research on how you currently use your time and have determined what some of the current abuses and abusers are, you are ready to take action to improve your use of time.

The four quadrant model presented in First Things First is helpful for thinking about the ways you use your time now: The authors present the following model

	Urgent	Not Urgent
	I.	II.
Important	Immediately productive activities Problems Crisis Productive meetings Deadlines	Prevention Seizing opportunities Preparation Planning Relationships True re-creation Productive meetings
Not Important	Interruptions, some phone calls Mail, some reports Non-productive meetings Pressing matters Many popular activities	Trivia, busywork Some mail Some phone calls Time wasters Many pleasant activities
	III.	IV.

The authors assert that we spend way too much time in quadrants 3 and 4 and not nearly enough in quadrant 2. You need to know what is most important to you. Time management is really self management. You are not just your work self; there are many other aspects of your life that you need to work to balance.

Consider as you take the initiative to make changes what you need and/or want to do to devote more time to your family, friends, volunteer work, your home, religion, professional development, etc. Each of us have different aspects of our life we want to balance.

Do a Personal Mission Statement. In First Things First, the authors recommend writing your personal mission statement. Other authors suggest alternative ways of clarifying what you consider most important. One way of doing this is to imagine that you are attending your funeral and people are talking about you. What would you want them to be saying about you? Or determine how much longer you have to live (based on a guess of the longevity record of your family) and list what all you would like to accomplish in that time. Or consider how you would spend your time if you knew today that you had one year to live. What would you do differently? Whatever method you select, you'll find this a very difficult task. But again just do it!

Do a Personal Master Plan. Do you have written goals for your life? If not, write some specific goals you want to accomplish. Remember a plan or goal is not one until you have written it down. This will take various levels but your goal is to have a master plan for your life over the next 5 years minimum. Then break that down into annual plans. You'll be developing both work and personal plans as you try to use your time more effectively.

Determine your MVT - Most Valuable use of your Time now . Mark Sanborn on his audio tape,*Managing Your Time, Energy, & Relationships*, suggests that you ask yourself what the best of use of your time is as you plan for your daily tasks. Also be sure that you, and your supervisor, agree on the best use of your time. The same principle is true for you and your supervisees. Are you all clear about your mission, your outcomes, and your expectations?

Some strategies for managing your time

You cannot really take control of your time until you understand your work behavioral style. Use one of the popular instruments such as the Personal Profile System from Perfomax or the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to help you understand your perceptions of your work style. Then determine what changes you may need to make in your natural tendencies i.e. if you are a perfectionist understand that means that projects are never right until you run out of time. On the other hand if you tend to be more social, understand that you may need to learn to control your natural talkative, gregarious style. Each aspect of work behavioral style carries with it some potentials for abusing the following recommendations for successful use of your time. With that in mind, however, the following suggestions are offered!

1. Take control of how you use time. You may find yourself having to make major changes in how you are using your time. This change will be difficult and will create an uncomfortable environment for your staff members. Involve them in the process.

Consider this information from Personnel Journal. "Next time you write a quick memo, consider a quick meeting instead. Studies show that routine memos are written once, and the rewritten 4.2 times. They also show that 54 minutes are spent planning, composing, and editing that memo. Here's the outcome: If an employee earns $35,000 a year ($17.50 per hour), the 54 minutes it takes to write a memo costs $15.75. If the memo is rewritten 4.2 times, that's $81.90. If one memo a week is written, that's $4,258.60 per year." So if you are a memo writer, you may want to give that up. A stand up meeting would certainly be more effective.

2. Commuting time - how much time do you currently spend commuting? Can you save yourself time if you leave earlier or later and avoid traffic both at the beginning and end of the day? Chances are such a change would be easy to make. For example, if I go to work at 7 a.m. I have no traffic to contend with and enjoy the most productive hour (7-8 a.m.) of the day.

3. Waiting time - are you spending frustrating time waiting for appointments, for meetings to start or at off-campus activities? Plan for the possibility of waiting time. Prepare a reading file that you carry with you so you are never without productive things to do.

4. Personal time - do you find that you have no time to enjoy yourself? What time do you plan to spend with family and friends? Do you exercise, enjoy hobbies, or ever play? Now is the time to take time for those pursuits.

5. Enlist the help of others in your time management. Time management can and should be a team effort. Create the awareness, determine how others can help you and vice verse, train others in time management and you'll do a better job of using not abusing your time. Too often we don't get help because we don't ask for it!

6. Use a system. Adopt one of the various time management systems available on the market. It's not what system you use but that you use one that counts. Also it helps to build team work with time management if the team is using the same time management system. Some popular paper systems include the Franklin Day Planner, Day Timer, Filofax, or Day Runner. Some are joining the age of technology by adopting one of the various systems available. Mayer highly recommends ACT! but there are other systems available such as Access (Franklin system) and calendar programs you might find helpful.

Even the best computer users still tend to keep a planner. Perhaps because of the easy mobility of it and the ease of access. *USA Today* revealed on Oct. 25, 1995 "When it comes to keeping themselves organized at work, computer users tend to do it the old-fashioned way. Used: Daily planner (paper) 30%, Memory 27%, "To do" lists 26%, computer programs 8%, electronic organizers 3%, no special way 3% and other 3%.

7. Get Organized. If organization is a problem for you, take the time to clean and organize your desk, your office, your briefcase, your computer files. Organization should also be a team effort. If you are working with an administrative assistant or executive secretary, he/she may be able to help you get organized. You both should be able to access any item you need in your office in a very short amount of time. Experts estimate that most of us waste at least one hour per day searching for material we need! Figure that out and it adds up to many days a year. Staying organized is something you'll have to work at. Periodic days to maintain organization may be necessary.

8. Learn to corral the massive amounts of paper that we still generate in this "paperless" society! Share professional reading with colleagues. Ask your assistant to copy the Table of Contents of your favorite journals so you can mark ones you'd like to have copies to put in your "waiting file."

9. Work when you are at your best! Many theorists recommend that you go to work earlier in the morning. Shad Helmstetter in Choices (p. 88) says "...if you get up just one hour earlier each morning you will add the equivalent of over two additional months of productive work days each year." That additional time could be used for other pursuits as well --fun, family, friends, frolic!

10. Renew yourself. Know what is truly re-creating for you. Is it a good book? A conference with your friends? A Caribbean Cruise? Playing golf? What? Each of us must have some activities that are energizing. Your organization gives you vacation time. Take it!

No matter what you do you'll still only have 24 hours each day. You will only get to use each day one time. Determine how to use not abuse your time.

Suggested Resources:

Aslett, Don. Clutter's Last Stand. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books, 1984.

Get More Done in Less Time. Videotape. Blackwood, NJ: Communication briefings, 1992.

Mayer, Jeffrey. Time Management for Dummies. Foster City, CA: IDG Books, 1995.

Merrill, Roger, Rebecca Merrill and Stephen Covey. First Things First.

Moskowitz, Robert. How to Organize Your Work and Your Life. New York: Doubleday, 1993.

Sanborn, Mark. Managing Your Time, Energy & Relationships. Audiotape set from Career Track, 1995.

Winston, Stephanie. The Organized Executive. New York: Warner Books, 1995.